(b) The training in Hindi typing and stenography is conducted by Deptt. of Official Language (MHA) which takes care of all the ministries and have limited number of seals. Moreover, the trained staff of the ministry often goes out of the ministry on promotion, deputation and transfer and fresh staff joins in their place.

(c) Keeping in view that 10 typists and stenographers could be covered in one year, the existing staff would be given training in Hindi typing and stenography within a period of five years.

Pension Scheme for Unorganised Sector

4498. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal to bring unorganized sector under pension scheme;

(b) whether any expert committee was appointed by Government on this count;

(c) whether it has given report; and

(d) if so, the salient features thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The salient features of the report of the Expert Committee are as follows :—

(i) The Project OASIS (an acronym for Old Age Social & Income Security) Expert Committee submitted its report to the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in January, 2000. The Committee has recommended a system which can be used by unorganized sector workers spread all over India, which enables them to attain old age income security at the price of modest contribution rates through their working career.

(ii) The proposed system is based on Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA). A person will open a single IRA with the proposed system

at as early a point in his life as possible. The account will provide the individual with a unique IRA number that will stay with the individual through life. The individual would save and accumulate assets into this account in his working life, subject to a minimum of Rs. 100 per contribution and Rs. 500 in total accretions per year. Individuals would be free to decide the frequency of accretions into their accounts; there will be no pressure to make a fixed monthly contribution. The account would stay with the individual across job changes, spells of unemployment, and can be accessed at any location in India. The individual would always have access to an account balance statement showing his assets. All through, the individual would be empowered in having control of how his accumulated assets should be managed. Finally, upon retirement, the individual would be able to use his accumulated assets to buy annuities from annuity providers, and obtain a monthly income.

(iii) In this entire process, a sound regulatory framework is required to provide individuals an umbrella of safety. The OASIS Expert Committee has accordingly recommended that a new Authority be commissioned in order to perform a variety of important roles in the institutional arrangements of the old age income security sector.

Mass Suicide by Four Sisters in Bhilai

†4499. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that four real sisters had committed mass suicide in steel-making city Bhilai because their parents had performed inter-caste marriage and these four sisters were obsessed with social frustration due to not getting married and society not accepted them;

(b) whether there is any scheme regarding creating social awareness and promoting intercaste marriage so that this is socially recognized; and

(c) whether any grant is given to recognized organizations for the said work ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) It is a fact

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.